



Oregon Memorial Association

And Funeral Consumers Education Foundation

**OREGON
MEMORIAL
ASSOCIATION**

&

**FUNERAL
CONSUMERS
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

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President's Message — 2017

As my term on the OMA/FCEF board is nearing its end, I would like to briefly reflect on our organization's current condition and advance a vision for our future.

Like many of our members, I've been on the membership roles for decades and I feel as strongly about OMA's vital role in our state as I did when I signed up. We still stand for dignified end of life services at an affordable cost and that's what we've been delivering for 56 years. Given current conditions, I see that our services are needed now as much as ever, and there is no reason why they would be needed any less in the future. Based on need, OMA's future should be bright.

But I also see some obstacles in our way with the largest being finances. During my years on your board we have been operating on a shoestring budget with income most months just barely meeting expenses (with a deficit showing up some months). Our Treasurer, Jeanne Staehli, has prepared a financial report that can be accessed on our website (www.fca-oregon.org/annual-report.html) and a brief statement from her is in this newsletter. The initial one-time lifetime OMA dues payment does not come near to providing for our operational needs which means we rely upon donations and record fees remitted by our mortuaries when an OMA member dies. In order for our organization to prosper and expand we need to consider several options. (1) Greatly increase the number of new membership applications received each month; (2) See an expansion of donations; or (3) Reconsider our policy of having lifetime memberships with no annual dues (i.e., transform OMA into an organization that requires annual renewal of membership with dues payable each year).



Dave Howard

Options 1 and 2 above are still workable for us but number 3, which has been suggested by some, is problematic. After 56 years of telling new members that their initial payment is for lifetime membership, it would be a breach of trust to change now. Also, setting up and administering a dues-collection process would be very costly and no doubt see us spending as much or more than what we would gain.

Another option for better financial health revolves around our printed-and-mailed annual newsletter. This publication costs OMA approximately \$4,500 each year and is, by far, our largest budget item aside from salary for a part-time office administrator. We could trim the newsletter cost considerably if more of our members voluntarily supplied their email address. Please consider doing that with the enclosed response envelope.

Thinking creatively, there are several ways members can help ensure the continued vitality of our OMA. Among those options are:

- Sending a check today in the remit envelope enclosed with this newsletter;
- Making a credit card donation. If you receive your newsletter by e-mail, check out the "Donate" button on OMA's website;

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President's Message

— From page 1

- Listing online our Funeral Consumers Education Foundation as your preferred nonprofit community organization for the Fred Meyer Rewards program. This costs you nothing and doesn't interfere with other Rewards benefits. The good Fred Meyer people recognize your FCEF designation by remitting to us quarterly a percentage of your total purchases at their stores. Sign up online at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards;
- Consider donating Interment Rights to FCEF for a burial plot or a niche you don't plan to use, and earn big tax deductions for your charitable contribution;
- Telling your death care representative that instead of flowers for your funeral, a contribution to OMA or FCEF in your memory would be a good choice;
- Naming OMA in your will for a special bequest;
- Providing in-kind donations of OMA Annual Meeting refreshments or door prizes;
- Finally, encourage family members and friends to join OMA. Application forms can be downloaded from our website.

After finances, our next largest obstacle is lack of volunteers in many regions. Your board, our single part-time office administrator and a handful of current volunteers (primarily in the Portland area) run the entire show for OMA. We could do SO much more if additional members would step up to volunteer. We are not just a Portland organization; it would be helpful to everyone if local chapters would spring up where neighbors could get together, organize end-of-life education opportunities, have membership campaigns and, most important, enjoy the opportunity to talk with others about end-of-life issues. If this sounds intriguing to you, let us know about your willingness to get involved. For those areas currently without contract providers, a local OMA group presence would help us secure services.

The need for OMA continues to be great and the route to the future is clear. I encourage members to step up to the challenges and work together to keep this great organization on the upward path.

— Dave Howard (Lebanon)

OMA Annual Meeting Sept. 16!

See story on page 3

OMA seeks recovery of fees owed by SCI

Since 1961, Oregon Memorial Association (OMA) has served members statewide, by making agreements with select mortuaries and funeral directors who agree to offer services to OMA members at a negotiated, fixed discounted price. This has long worked well for both members and participating mortuaries. It gives OMA a small but much needed steady trickle of funds.

These contracts have always said that the OMA price includes a small "record fee" that the provider collects and pays to OMA after providing the agreed services. OMA believes that providers owe the record fee to OMA just as surely as they owe the death certificate fee to the state.

That three-way fee split is clearly stated in the OMA price list.

However, one chain funeral provider, SCI, refuses to send the record fee to OMA after our members use SCI facilities. In response, OMA has retained a consumer attorney, John Gear, to pursue the funds.

Portland-area OMA members were long served by funeral homes known as Little Chapels of the Chimes. SCI now owns all but one of these and operates them as Dignity Memorial funeral homes. These are the ones refusing to pay OMA the record fees collected from OMA members.

SCI claims it is not bound by prepayment agreements made by OMA members with Little Chapels, even though SCI does collect the fee when it serves OMA members. Gear responds that SCI owes OMA members a fiduciary duty to give that money to OMA, and that SCI cannot keep the money nor use it to pay for extra services.

We have asked the Oregon State Cemetery and Mortuary Board, the industry overseer, to investigate. OMA hopes this will spur an acceptable resolution of the matter, and that litigation will not be necessary to get all mortuaries that honor OMA prices to send us the record fees they collect from our members.

Review, Revise, Resubmit

Your Oregon Memorial Association can best help you and your survivors if your information on file with us is up to date. Help us update your file by reviewing your Personal Instruction Form (PIF); revising any information on it such as address, phone, email or new end-of-life instruction; finally, resubmit the form to us. When your next of kin calls us, we'll be able to share your wishes.

This form is on our website at www.fca-oregon.org — under "About" then "Member Forms." Mail completed forms to OMA, PO Box 13306, Portland, OR 97213.

Provider changes for Linn-Benton members

Albany's AAsum-Dufour Funeral Home has not been serving Oregon Memorial Association (OMA) members for several months at the current OMA member prices in effect statewide. During that time, we have negotiated in good faith, as required by our February 25, 2014, contract. In late June, after reviewing the new price list OMA is proposing, effective 1 September 2017, the Dufours gave notice they are still unwilling to offer such deep discounts to our members. The contract has been canceled by mutual agreement.

The Albany-Corvallis area formerly served by AAsum-Dufour is within the service area of Salem's Restlawn Funeral Home. Restlawn has been OMA's contract provider since October 2007. OMA members who have filed their Personal Instruction Forms (PIFs) with AAsum-Dufour can continue to receive OMA member prices by asking AAsum-Dufour or OMA to transfer their PIFs to Restlawn. (Mileage charges will apply outside a 25-mile radius from Salem.) If you haven't filled out a PIF, or want to change your original instructions, you can do that by downloading the PIF form from OMA's website. (<http://www.fca-oregon.org/member-forms--info.html>)

Please share your thoughts about Oregon geography vis a vis OMA contracts with funeral homes. Tell us how this change will affect you.

OMA website updated

Your OMA website has been totally redesigned and updated thanks to the skills of our office administrator, Robin Chilstrom.

On the website you will find OMA essentials such as an up-to-date list of providers; forms (Personal Instruction Form, membership application, and others); a convenient online form to update your OMA contact information; educational articles; and notices of events that should be of interest to OMA members.

Check the website often — www.fca-oregon.org

Plan now to attend OMA's annual meeting September 16

This year's annual meeting for the Oregon Memorial Association and Funeral Consumers Education Foundation promises to be an event members will not want to miss!

The special speaker at this meeting will be Gretchen Brauer-Rieke, a longtime registered nurse and nursing educator who specializes in helping people with end-of-life issues. She is author of the popular book, *In Advance: A Practical Guide to Making Your Own End-of-Life Health Care Decisions*. Gretchen is an engaging speaker and her topic for the OMA gathering is, "The Best Gift You'll Ever Give – Talking to Your Family."



Gretchen Brauer-Rieke

"My passion is to help the public understand how to die as well as possible," she said, "in a culture where death is often denied and in a medical system that tends to over-treat and distort what might otherwise be a graceful last chapter of life."

There will be, of course, a very short OMA/FCEF business meeting when members will vote to elect individuals to the board of trustees. The Nominating Committee has proposed three candidates at press time with the possibility of others being announced at the meeting. *Phil Berger* became an advocate for OMA while helping others plan their funerals; *Elizabeth Jessop* is a Portland attorney specializing in elder and estate law; and *Barbara Smythe* was a founding member of the board for Nonprofit Organization Law Section for the Oregon State Bar.

The meeting is open to members, their family members and friends and will be held Sat. Sept. 16. Details about the event are on page 4 of this newsletter.

Please RSVP to 1-888-475-5520 or fcaoregon@gmail.com if you will be arriving by MAX so we can pick you up at the end of the Orange line as late as 1:21 p.m.

Complete Your Plan! FCEF has available—

1 Burial Plot at Skyline Memorial Park

4101 NW Skyline Blvd., Portland

2 Burial Plots at River View Cemetery

0300 SW Taylors Ferry Rd., Portland

2 Mausoleum Crypts at Lincoln Memorial Park

11801 SE Mt. Scott Blvd., Portland

These premier properties can be yours at discounted prices through Funeral Consumers Education Foundation. For details call 888-475-5520

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*Invite a Friend
To Join The
Oregon Memorial Association*

Treasurer's report available

Virtually all revenue for OMA and FCEF comes from members: When they join; when they die; and when they thrive and make freewill donations to OMA. Each member's funeral price includes a \$50 record fee.

Until 2008, new member dues and record fees covered operating expenses. Then the international funeral corporation, SCI, stopped sending OMA the record fees they collect when OMA members use Little Chapels of the Chimes. (Most families do not know that notifying OMA of a member's death would help OMA claim the Record Fee the mortuary has already collected.)

Meanwhile, your donations are badly needed NOW to replace \$4,500 spent since June 30 to notify our 9,000 member households by newsletter of the time and place of the September annual meeting. Please attend! RSVP if you can't come to let us know you care. Please give as generously as you can afford in order to replenish OMA's depleted bank account. THANK YOU!

A complete financial report is available on the OMA website at www.fca-oregon.org/annual-report.html/.

Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017

Oregon Memorial Association's 56th Annual Meeting

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

**Rose Villa Retirement Center
(Performing Arts Center)
13505 SE River Rd.
Portland, Oregon**

See the website (www.fca-oregon.org) or phone for printed driving directions (503-647-5590.)

*All OMA Members
& Friends Are
Encouraged to Attend*

(See Story on Page 3)